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JOSEPH ZABARA AND HIS "BOOK OF DELIGHT."

JOSEPH ZABARA¹ has only in recent times received the consideration due to him as a poet. Yet his *Book of Delight*, finished about the year 1200,² is more than a poetical romance. It is a golden link between folk-literature and imaginative poetry. The poem is of considerable length; but while the framework is original, the stories and sayings, which are incidentally introduced, are compiled, not invented. Hence, to the folklorist, the poem is as valuable as to the literary critic. For though Zabara's compilation is similar to such well known models as the *Book of Sindibad*, the *Kalilah Vedimnah*, and others of the class, yet its appearance in Europe is half a century earlier than the translations by which those other products of the East became part of the popular literature of the Western world. Thus, at the least, the *Book of Delight* is an important addition to the scanty store of the folk-lore records of the early part of the thirteenth century.

As a poet and writer of Hebrew, Joseph Zabara's place

¹ The Constantinople edition spells the name זבארה, the Paris edition זברא, Joseph Kimchi (*Ozar Nechmad*, I. 106), spells it in the former manner. See also *Hamazkir*, viii. 89. But, for the whole question of Kimchi's supposed citation of Zabara, see Steinschneider in *Hamazkir*, xiii. 106 and 113, especially the latter place, where much information will be found. On the identification of זבר with Zabara, see Sachs' Introduction to the Paris edition, and Steinschneider's *Die Hebr. Uebersetz.*, pp. 441 and 989. Senior Sachs gives some reasons for holding that the poet's father was named Meir.

² I fix this date by a phrase used in the Constantinople edition. Here Sheshet Benveniste is described by Zabara as הנביא הזקן (the phrase is absent from the Paris edition). Sheshet Benveniste (Graetz, *Geschichte*, VI. note 1) was born in 1131. He would thus not be seventy until 1201, and Zabara would hardly have used the term הזקן unless Sheshet was turned seventy.

is equally significant. He was probably the first¹ to write Hebrew in rhymed prose, with interspersed snatches of verse,² the form invented by Arabian poets, and much esteemed as the medium for story-telling, and for writing social satire. The best and best-known specimens of this form of poetry in Hebrew, are Charizi's *Tachkemoni*, and his translation of *Hariri*. But, though Zabara has less art than Charizi, and far less technical skill, yet in him are all the qualities in the bud which Charizi's poems present in the full-blown flower. The reader of Zabara feels that other poets will develop his style and surpass him; the reader of Charizi knows of a surety that in him the style has reached its climax.

Of Joseph Zabara little is known beyond what may be gleaned from a discriminating study of the *Book of Delight*. That this romance is largely an autobiography in fact, just as it is in form, there can be no reasonable doubt. The poet writes with so much indignant warmth of the people of certain cities, of their manner of life, their morals and their culture, that one can only infer that he is relating his personal experiences. That Zabara, like the hero of his romance, travelled much during the latter portion of the twelfth century, is known from the researches of Geiger.³ He was born in Barcelona, and returned there to die. But in the interval, we find him an apt pupil of Joseph Kimchi, in Narbonne. Joseph Kimchi, the founder of the famous Kimchi family, carried to Provence the culture of Spain;

¹ Mr. Joseph Jacobs, to whom I owe many valuable suggestions, has proved that Berachya Nakdan, who also wrote in rhymed prose, lived at the end of the twelfth century. It is thus doubtful whether to him or to Zabara belongs the distinction of introducing this form into Hebrew. It has been conjectured that Berachya visited Narbonne, where Zabara also studied under Joseph Kimchi. It is possible that the latter was the inventor of the style.

² I have not translated any of these poetical snatches (of which there are more in the Constantinople edition than in the Paris), as their literary merit is small.

³ *Ozar Nechmad*, I. p. 106, etc.

and Joseph Zabara may have acquired from him his mastery over Hebrew which our poet writes with purity and admirable simplicity.¹ The difficulties presented in some passages of the *Book of Delight* are entirely due to the corrupt state of the text. Joseph Kimchi, who flourished in Provence from 1150 to 1170, quotes Joseph Zabara twice, with approval, in explaining verses in Proverbs. It would thus seem that Joseph Zabara, in his student days, was already devoted to the proverb-lore on which he draws so lavishly in his maturer work.

Dr. Steinschneider, to whom belongs the credit of re-discovering Zabara in modern times,² says that the poet was probably a physician. There is more than probability in the case; there is certainty. The romance is built by a doctor; there is more talk of medicine in it than of any other topic of discussion. Moreover the author, who denies that he is much of a Talmudist, accepts the compliment paid to him by his visitor, Enan, that he is "skilled and well-informed in the science of medicine."³ There is, too, a professional tone about many of the quips and gibes in which Zabara indulges concerning doctors. "A philosopher," says Zabara, "was sick unto death, and his doctor gave him up; yet the patient recovered. The convalescent was walking in the street when the doctor met him. 'You come,' said he, 'from the other world.' 'Yes,' rejoined the patient, 'I come from there, and I saw there the awful retribution that falls on the doctors; for they kill their patients. Yet do not feel alarmed. You

¹ Some of Zabara's phrases are a little strange, and possibly suggest that the author was translating from a non-Semitic language. But the linguistic evidence for this is very slight, and I should be disinclined to base any argument on it. The phrases are just as probably Greek as Romance, and Zabara may have been using an Arabic translation of a Greek text. On the other hand, some of the words used strengthen the argument in favour of the theory that Zabara may have had a Romance text before him when compiling some of his stories.

² *Ersch und Grüber*, ii. 31, article "Joseph Zabara."

³ Paris edition, p. 31.

will not suffer. I told them on my oath that you are no doctor.'"¹ Again, in one of the poetical interludes (found only in the Constantinople edition) occurs this very professional sneer:—"A doctor and the Angel of Death both kill, but the former charges a fee." Who but a doctor would enter into a scathing denunciation of the current diagnosis, which Zabara does in a sarcastic passage which Erter must unconsciously have imitated? And if further proof be needed that Zabara was a man of science, the evidence is forthcoming; for Zabara several times appeals to experiment in proof of his assertions.²

The life of Joseph ben Meir Zabara³ was apparently not a happy one. He left Barcelona in search of learning and comfort; he found the former, but the latter eluded him. It is hard to say from the *Book of Delight* whether he was a woman-hater or not. On the one hand he says many pretty things about women, and the moral of the first section of the romance is: Put your trust in women; while the moral of the second section of the poem is: A good woman is the best part of man. But, though this is so, Zabara does undoubtedly quote a large number of stories, full of point and sting—stories which tell of women's wickedness and infidelity, of their weakness of intellect and fickleness of will. His philogynist tags hardly compensate for his misogynist satires. He runs with the hare and hunts with the hounds. But Oriental satire directed against women must not be taken too seriously. As Güdemann has shown, the very Jews who wrote most bitterly of women were loud in praises of their own wives—the women whom alone they knew intimately. Woman was the standing butt for men to hurl their darts at, and one cannot help feeling that a good deal of the fun

¹ Paris edition, p. 24.

² *Ibid.*, p. 32. In the Constantinople edition there are two other instances of experimental proofs.

³ Senior Sachs argues with plausibility in favour of the supposition that Zabara's father was named Meir.

got its point from the knowledge that the charges were exaggerated or untrue. You find the Jewish satirists exhausting all their stores of drollery over the subject of rollicking drunkenness. They roar till their sides creak over the humour of the wine-bibber. They laugh at him and with him. They turn again and again to the subject, which with the Jewish poets shares the empire with women. Yet we know well enough that the writers of these Hebrew Anacreontic lyrics were sober men, who rarely indulged in over-much strong drink. In short, the mediæval Jewish satirists were gifted with much of what is now foolishly styled the "new humour." Joseph Zabara was a new humourist. He has the quaint subtlety of the author of the *Ingoldsby Legends*, and the exaggeration of trifles which is the stock-in-trade of the Anglo-American school of modern funny men. Woman plays with him the part that the mother-in-law played with the latter a generation ago. In Zabara, again, there is a good deal of mere rudeness, which the author seems to mistake for cutting repartee. This, I take it, is another characteristic of the so-called new humour.

The probable explanation of the marked divergence between Zabara's stories and the moral he draws from them lies, however, a little deeper. The stories themselves are probably Indian in origin; hence they are marked by the tone hostile to woman so characteristic of Indian folk lore. On the other hand, if Zabara himself was a friendly critic of woman, his own moralisings in her favour are explained. This theory is by no means upset by the fact mentioned below,¹ for those stories, too, are translations, and Zabara cannot be held responsible for their contents. The selection in his day must have been restricted within very narrow limits.

Zabara's reading must have been extensive. He knew something of astronomy, philosophy, the science of physio-

¹ See page 510.

gnomy,¹ music, mathematics and physics, and a good deal of medicine. He was familiar with Arabian collections of proverbs and tales, for he several times informs his readers that he was drawing on Arabic sources. He knew the *Choice of Pearls*, the Midrashic *Stories of King Solomon*, the *Maxims of the Philosophers*, the *Proverbs of the Wise*; but not *Sendabar* in its Hebrew form.² His acquaintance with the language of the Bible was thorough; but he makes one or two blunders in quoting the substance of Scriptural passages. Though he disclaimed the title of a Talmudical scholar, he was not ignorant of the Rabbinical literature. Everyone quotes it: the fox, the woman, Enan, and the author. He was sufficiently at home in this literature to pun therein. He also knew the story of Tobit, but as he introduces it as "a most marvellous tale" it is clear that this book of the Apocrypha was not widely popular in his day. The story, as Zabara tells it, differs considerably from the Apocryphal version of it. The incidents are misplaced, the story of the betrothal is disconnected with that of the recovery of the money by Tobit, the incident of the gallows occurs in no other known text of the story. In one point, Zabara's version strikingly agrees with the Hebrew and Chaldee texts of Tobit as against the Greek; Tobit's son is not accompanied by a dog on his journey to recover his father's long-lost treasure.

One of the tales told by Zabara seems to imply a phenomenon of the existence of which there is no other evidence. There seem to have been in Spain a small class

¹ In the Constantinople edition there is, near the beginning, a long passage (absent from the Paris edition), concerning the relations between a man's bodily peculiarities, such as his stature and so forth, and his character. There was in particular a prejudice against men of exceptional height; they were regarded as mostly fools. (Cf. מעשה טוביה, I. 4.)

² Zabara does not seem to have known Adelard's *Questions*. Only two of them (Nos. 32 and 51) occur in the long string of queries and answers which figure in the *Book of Delight*.

of Jews who were secret converts to Christianity. They passed openly for Jews, but were in truth Christians. The motive for the concealment is unexplained.¹

It remains for me to describe the texts now extant of the *Book of Delight*. In 1865 the *Sefer Shaashuim* appeared, from a fifteenth century MS. in Paris, in the second volume of a Hebrew periodical called the *Lebanon*. In the following year the late Senior Sachs wrote an introduction to it, and to two other publications, which were afterwards issued together under the title *Yen Lebanon*, Paris, 1866. The editor was aware of the existence of another text, but, strange to tell, he did not take the trouble to examine it. Had he done this, his own edition would have been greatly improved. For the Bodleian Library possesses another copy of the *Book of Delight*, undated and without place of issue, but printed in Constantinople in 1577. The editor was Isaac Akrish, as we gather from a marginal note to the version of Tobit given by Joseph Zabara. This Isaac Akrish was a travelling bookseller, who printed interesting little books, and hawked them about. Dr. Steinschneider points out² that the date of Isaac Akrish's edition can be approximately fixed by the type. The type is that of the Jaabez press, established in Constantinople and Salonichi in 1560. This Constantinople edition is not only fuller than the Paris, it is, on the whole, more accurate. It is a good deal longer than the Paris edition, and the chief additions will be indicated in the notes below. The verbal variations between the two editions are extremely numerous, but the greater accuracy of the Constantinople edition shows itself in many

¹ See the story, page 524 below. If the story was taken straight from an Arabic source, the introduction of the crucifix is explained. The story may have been originally about the Druses, or Nestorian Christians; but, if so, it would be strange that Zabara should not have seen the inappropriateness of the tale for Jewish readers. I am inclined to think that Zabara was aiming a blow at some section of the Barcelonian Jews.

² *Ersch und Grüber*, ii. 28, p. 39; and ii. 31, p. 93.

ways. The rhymes are much better preserved, though the Paris edition is occasionally superior in this respect. But many passages in the Paris edition which are quite unintelligible, are clear enough in the Constantinople edition. One or two instances will suffice to prove this. On p. 14 P. reads: ואקום בבקר ובראתי המצור לפני, which is nonsense. C. reads ויאמר משל הערב כי, which at once restores the meaning. Near the end of page 36, P. reads: העבד מהומר אדוניו קורץ • וישמר אדוניו ולשונו עלי חרץ. The word וישמר is unintelligible, but C. reads וישמעני, which is quite easy. Worst of all is the reading in P. of the name of the gigantic visitor, Enan. P. calls him בן הרש, while C., rightly, gives his name as בן הדש, which, inverted, makes בן השד. It is strange that Sachs, in his preface, gives the name correctly, while in the text itself the name is wrongly printed. Again, C. is better in calling the hero of the story given on page 520, below, בנן, while P. calls him דון. So, in another story, C. has פריזי, while P. has פרכי; the latter reading destroys the relevancy of the pointed reference in the tale to tilling the ground. C., again, is better in having גוף for קוף, and in several places the sense of a passage is lost in P. through its omissions. A striking example may be seen in P., page 36, where Enan's anger is quite unjustifiable; but in C. the hero Joseph has several lines of violent abuse of Enan. That P. has been *edited*, is clear from one or two minor points. Thus in the story of the singer, C. describes the tree as בראננה, or orange; the word does not appear in P. Again, the Paris edition omits a passage in the description of Enan's friend, which might have been thought defamatory of Christianity.¹ The last lines of P. imply that the copy was made at a time of trouble; and the absence of rhyme itself throws suspicion on the genuineness of the passage: ה' ברחמיו יצילנו מתלאות וצרות ויאמר די לצרות עמו ישראל וכן יהי רצון אמן

אכן חמתו חמת עכשוב וכבודו לכל איש גלוי כי הוא מזרע התלוי 1

There was nothing in the condition of the Jews of Barcelona in 1200 to call for this sentiment. C. closes, more appropriately, thus: * המקום יזכנו להמנות עם הכשרים * ותמות נפשנו מות ישרים * וישא חלקנו עם עבדיו * כרוב חסדיו : אמן.

In the Constantinople edition, the *Sefer Shaashuim* is preceded by three other items, (a) מאמרי הראפאים ; (b) נדר אלמנה ; (c) מאמר מדיני אשה. These, according to Steinschneider (and from a careful perusal of them I am inclined to agree with him), are also by Joseph Zabara.¹ They belong, I think, to the *Book of Delight* itself, and ought to be inserted in the "Leopard" section, as they are tales with strong bias against women. I should say that the copy of this edition, possessed by the Bodleian, is unique, no other copy is extant. Leopold Dukes had it copied some thirty years ago, but he appears to have made no use of his copy.² My own copy was made for me in 1887 by Mr. Spero.³

The gigantic visitor of Joseph, the narrator, and undoubtedly the author himself, is a strange being. Like the guide of Gil Blas on his adventures, he is called a demon, and he glares and emits smoke and fire. But he proves amenable to argument, and quotes the story of the washerwoman to show how it was that he became a reformed devil. This devil quotes the Rabbis, and is easily convinced that it is unwise for him to wed an ignorant bride. It would seem as though Zabara were, on the one hand, hurling a covert attack against some one

¹ See particularly *Die Hebr. Uebersetz.*, p. 658.

² He often refers to the *Sefer Shaashuim*, quoting the Paris edition e.g., in his *Philosophisches aus dem Zehnten Jahrhundert*, p. 109. The poem is also quoted in the פ' בעליותך מקור חיים and end of פ' שלח לך in מורה המורה, p. 125. See also Steinschneider, ר"ן תבון, p. 7, and החלוץ, VIII., p. 149, note 2 ; Dukes' *Orient*, 1850, pp. 250 and 299.

³ Mr. S. Schechter and I have long intended to re-edit the *Book of Delight*. I am indebted to Mr. Schechter for much valuable help in writing this essay. Professor Kaufmann is about to edit the book.

who had advised him to leave Barcelona to his own hurt, while, on the other hand, satirising the current beliefs of Jews and Christians in evil spirits. More than one passage, as we have already seen, is decidedly anti-Christian, and I should not be surprised if the framework of the romance was polemical in intention. Certainly the framework is fresher and more elaborate than one would expect in a mere imitation.

In the summary of the book which follows, I have only in one case (see page 522 below) attempted to reproduce the rhymed prose of the original Hebrew. This form of poetry is unsuited to the English language, and is indistinguishable from doggrel. I have not translated at full length, but I have endeavoured to reproduce Zabara accurately without introducing thoughts foreign to him.

I offer no elaborate theory on the folk-lore of the poem. I shall be greatly mistaken, however, if the collection of stories that follow does not prove of considerable interest to those engaged in the tracking of fables to their native lairs. Here, in Zabara, we have an earlier instance than was previously known in Europe of an intertwined series of fables and witticisms, partly Indian, partly Greek in origin, welded together by the Hebrew poet by means of a framework. The use of the framework by a writer in Europe in the year 1200 is itself noteworthy. But Mr. Joseph Jacobs, who has already proved of much service to me, has promised to deal with this part of the subject at no very distant date.

THE GIANT GUEST.

Once on a night, I, Joseph, lay upon my bed, and my sleep was sweet upon me, my one return for all my toil. Things there are which weary the soul and rest the body, others that weary the body and rest the soul, but sleep brings calm to the body and the soul at once. . . . While I slept, I dreamt; and a gigantic but manlike figure appeared before me, rousing me from my slumber. "Arise, thou sleeper, rouse thyself and see the wine while it is red; come sit thee down and eat of what I provide." It was dawn as I hastily rose, and I saw before me wine, bread and viands; and in the man's hand

was a lighted lamp, which cast a glare into every corner. I answered and said, "What are these, my master." "My wine, my bread, my viands ; come eat and drink with me, for I love thee as one of my mother's sons." And I thanked him, but protested : "I cannot eat or drink till I have prayed to the Orderer of all my ways ; for Moses, the choice of the prophets and the head of those called, ordained 'Eat not with the blood,' therefore no son of Israel will eat until he prays for his soul, for the blood is the soul. . . ." ¹

Then said he, "Pray, if such be thy wish"; and I bathed my hands and face and prayed. Then I ate of all that was before me, for my soul loved him. . . . Wine I would not drink, though he pressed me sore. "Wine," I said, "blindeth the eyes, robbeth the old of wisdom and the body of strength, it revealeth the secrets of friends, and raiseth discussion between brothers." The man's anger was roused. "Why blasphemest thou against wine, and bearest false witness against it? Wine bringeth joy ; sorrow and sighing fly before it. It strengtheneth the body, maketh the heart generous, prolongeth pleasure, and deferreth age ; faces it maketh shine, and the senses it maketh bright."

"Agreed, but let thy servant take the water first as the ancient physicians advise, later I will take the wine, a little, without water."

When I had eaten and drunk with him, I asked him for his name and his purpose. "I come," said he, "from a distant land, from pleasant and fruitful hills, my wisdom is as thine, my law as thine, my name Enan Hanatash, the son of Arnan Hadash." I was amazed at the name, unlike any I had ever heard before. "Come with me from this land, and I will tell thee all my secret lore ; leave this spot, for they know not here thy worth and thy wisdom. I will take thee to another place, pleasant as a garden, peopled by loving men, wise above all others." But I answered, "My lord, I cannot go. Here are many wise and friendly; while I live they give me life, when I die they will make sweet my death. . . . I fear thee for thy long limbs, and in thy face I see clear-cut the marks of unworthiness ;² I fear thee, and will not be thy companion lest there befall me what befell the leopard with the fox." And I told him the story.

THE FOX AND THE LEOPARD.

A leopard³ once lived in content and plenty ; ever he found easy sustenance for his wife and his children. Hard by there dwelt his

¹ *Berachoth*, 10b.

² In C. there here occurs the long passage mentioned on page 507. Note 1 above.

³ On the leopard or panther in folk-lore, see Paulus Cassel, *Mischle Sindbad*, pp. 214-217.

neighbour and friend, the fox. The fox felt in his heart that his life was safe only so long as the leopard could catch other prey; and planned out a method for ridding himself of this dangerous friendship. Before the evil cometh, say the wise, counsel is good. "Let me move him hence," thought the fox; "I will lead him to the paths of death; for the sages say: 'If one come to slay thee, be beforehand with him, and slay him instead.'" Next day the fox went to the leopard and told him of a spot he had seen, a spot of gardens and lilies, where fawns and does disported themselves, and everything was fair. The leopard went with him to behold this paradise, and rejoiced with exceeding joy. "Ah," thought the fox, "many a smile ends in a tear." But the leopard was charmed, and wished to move to this delightful abode; "but, first," said he, "I will go to consult my wife, my life-long comrade, the bride of my youth." The fox was sadly afraid. Full well he knew the wisdom and the craft of the leopard's wife. "Nay," said he, "trust not thy wife. A woman's counsel is evil and foolish, her heart hard like marble; she is a plague in a house. Yes, ask her advice, and do the opposite."¹ . . . The leopard told his wife that he was resolved to go. "Beware of the fox," she exclaimed, "two small animals there are, the craftiest they, by far: the serpent and the fox. Hast thou not heard how the fox bound the lion, and slew him with cunning?" "How did the fox dare," asked the leopard, "to come near enough to the lion to do it?"

THE FOX AND THE LION.

Then said the leopard's wife:—The lion loved the fox, but the fox had no faith in him, and plotted his death. One day the fox went to the lion whining that a pain had seized him in the head. "I have heard," said the fox, "that physicians prescribe for a head-ache that the patient shall be tied up hand and foot." The lion assented, and bound up the fox with a cord. "Ah," blithely said the fox, "my pain is gone." Time passed, and the lion's turn came to suffer in his head. In sore distress he went to the fox, and exclaimed:—"Bind me up, that I too may be healed as happened with thee." The fox took fresh cords and bound the lion up. Then went he to fetch great stones which he cast on the lion's head and thus crushed him. "Therefore, my dear leopard," concluded his wife, "trust not the fox, for I fear him and his wiles."

The leopard would not hearken to his wife's advice, yet

¹ The malice and craft of women are the favourite theme of Indian stories. Cf. the series in *Sindibad*.

was he somewhat moved by her warning, and he told the fox of his misgiving. "Ah," replied the fox, "I fear your fate will be like the goldsmith's; let me tell you his story, and you will know how silly it is to listen to a wife's counsel."

THE GOLDSMITH WHO FOLLOWED HIS WIFE'S COUNSEL.

A goldsmith of Babylon, skilful in his craft, was one day at work. "Listen to me," said his wife, "and I will make thee rich and honoured. Our lord, the king, has an only daughter, and he loves her as his life. Fashion for her a golden image of herself, and I will bear it to her as a gift." The statue was soon made, and the princess rejoiced at seeing it. She gave the artist's wife a cloak and earrings, and she showed them to her husband in triumph. "But where is the wealth and the honour?" he asked; "the statue was worth much more than you have brought." Next day the king saw the statue in his daughter's hand, and his anger was kindled. "Is it not ordered," he cried, "that none should make an image? Cut off his right hand." The king's command was carried out, and daily the smith wept, and exclaimed: "Take warning from me, ye husbands, and obey not the voice of your wives."

THE WOODCUTTER AND THE WOMAN.

The leopard shuddered when he heard this tale; but the fox went on: A hewer of wood in Damascus was cutting logs, and his wife sat spinning by his side. "My departed father," she said, "was a better workman than thou. He could chop with both hands: when the right hand was tired he used the left." "Nay," said he, "no woodcutter does that." "Ah, my dear," she entreated, "try and do it as my father did." The witless wight raised his left hand to hew the wood, but struck his right-hand thumb instead. Without a word he seized the axe and smote her on the head, and she died. His deed was noised about; the woodcutter was seized and stoned for his crime. "Therefore," continued the fox, "I say unto thee, all women are deceivers and trappers of souls."

MAN'S LOVE AND WOMAN'S.¹

Let me tell you more of these wily stratagems, said the fox. A king of the Arabs, wise and well-advised, was one day seated with his councillors, who were loud in the praise of women, lauding their

¹ Cf. Jellinek, *Beth. Hamidrash* iv. 147.

virtues and their wisdom. "Cease these words," said the king. "Never since the world began has there been a good woman. They love for their own ends." "But," pleaded his sages, "O king, thou art hasty. Women there are, wise and faithful, who love their husbands and tend their children." "Then," said the king, "here is my city before you : search it through, and find one of the good women of whom you speak." They sought, and they found a woman, chaste and wise, fair as the moon and bright as the sun, the wife of a wealthy trader ; and the councillors reported about her to the king. He sent for her husband, and received him with favour. "I have something for thy ear," said the king. "I have a good and precious daughter : I will not give her to a king or a prince : let me find a simple, faithful man, who will love her and hold her in esteem. Thou art such a one ; thou shalt have her. But thou art married : slay thy wife to-night, and to-morrow thou shalt wed my daughter." "I am unworthy," pleaded the man, "to be the shepherd of thy flock, much less the husband of thy daughter." But the king would take no denial. "But how shall I kill my wife ? For five and twenty years she has eaten of my bread and drunk of my cup. She is the joy of my heart ; her love and esteem grow day by day." "Slay her," said the king, "and be king hereafter." He went forth from the presence, downcast and sad, thinking over, and a little shaken by, the king's temptation. At home he saw his wife and his two babes. "Better," he cried, "is my wife than a kingdom. Cursed be all kings who tempt men to sip sorrow, calling it joy." The king waited his coming in vain ; but when he found that the man's love had conquered his lust, said, with a sneer, "Thou art no man : thy heart is a woman's." In the evening the king summoned the woman secretly. She came, and the king praised her beauty and her wisdom. His heart was burning with love for her, but he could not wed another man's wife. "Slay thy husband to-night, and to-morrow be my queen." With a smile, the woman consented ; and the king gave her a sword made of tin, for he knew the weak mind of woman. "Strike once," he said to her ; "the sword is sharp ; you need not essay a second blow." She gave her husband a choice repast, and wine to make him drunk. As he lay asleep, she grasped the sword and struck him on the head ; and the tin bent, and he awoke. With some ado she quieted him, and he fell asleep again. Next morning the king asked her, had she obeyed his orders : "Yes," said she ; "but thou didst frustrate thine own counsel." Then the king assembled his sages, and bade her tell all that she had attempted ; and the husband, too, was fetched, to tell his story. "Did I not tell you to cease your praises of women ?" asked the king, triumphantly.

IN DISPRAISE OF WOMAN.

The fox follows up these effective narratives with a lengthy string of well-worn quotations against women, of which the following are a few: "Socrates, the wise and saintly, hated them and loathed their forms. His wife was thin and short. They asked him, How could a man like you choose such a woman for your wife? "I chose," said Socrates, "of the evil the least possible amount." Once he was walking by the way and saw a woman hanging from a fig-tree. "Would," said Socrates, "that all the fruit were like this." A noble built a new house, and wrote over the door "Let nothing evil pass this way."—"Then how does his wife go in?" asked Diogenes.¹ "Your enemy is dead," said one to another. "I would rather hear that he had got married" was the reply.

So much, said the fox to the leopard, I have told thee that thou mayest know how little women are to be trusted. They deceive men in life and betray them in death. "But," queried the leopard, "what could my wife do to harm me after I am dead?" "Listen," rejoined the fox, "and I will tell thee of a deed viler than any that I have narrated already."

THE WIDOW AND HER HUSBAND'S CORPSE.²

The kings of Rome, when they hanged a man, denied him burial until the tenth day. That the friends and relatives of the victim might not steal the body, an officer of high rank was set to watch the tree by nights. Were the body stolen, the officer was hung up

¹ Cf. משלי חכמים, 69 and 70.

² For parallels, see Mr Joseph Jacobs, *Fables of Aesop*, Vol. I., page 245. Cf. *Tosafoth* to Kiddushin, fol. 80b, which Mr. Clouston (page 340 of his edition of *Sindibad*) confuses with the Talmud itself. In the parallels there is considerable variation as to the ruses of the widow to assimilate her husband's body to that of the criminal. In the *Liber de Donis* there is no mutilation at all. See also Steinschneider, *Hamazkir*, xiii. 78. Sir Walter Scott uses part of this incident in the standard-watching episode in *The Talisman*.

in its place. A knight of high degree once rebelled against the king, and he was hanged on a tree. The officer on guard was startled at midnight to hear a piercing shriek of anguish from a little distance; and he turned aside towards the voice to discover the meaning. He came to an open grave where the common people were buried, and saw a weeping woman loud in laments for her departed spouse. He sent her home with words of comfort. Next night the same scene was repeated, and as the officer spoke his gentle soothings to her, a love for him was born in her heart, and her dead husband was forgotten. And as they spoke words of love they neared the tree, and lo! the body which the officer was set to watch was gone. "Begone," he said, "and I will fly, or my life must pay the penalty of my dalliance." "Fear not, my lord," she said, "we can raise my husband from his grave and hang him instead of the stolen corpse." "But I fear the prince of death. I cannot drag a man from his grave." "I alone will do it then," said the woman; "I will dig him out." "Alas!" cried the officer, when she had done the fear-some deed: "the corpse I watched was bald, your husband has thick hair; the change will be detected." "Nay," said the woman, "I will make him bald," and she tore his hair out, with execrations, and they hung him on the tree. But few days passed and the pair were married.

THE LEOPARD'S FATE.

The leopard trembled at this tale. Angrily he addressed his wife: "Come, get up and follow me, or I will slay thee." Together they went with their young ones, and the fox was their guide, and they reached the promised place, and encamped by the waters. Seven days were gone, when the rains descended, and in the deep of the night the river rose and engulfed the leopard family in their beds. "Woe is me," sighed the leopard, "that I did not listen to my wife." And he died before his time.

THE JOURNEY BEGUN BY JOSEPH AND ENAN.

The author has now finished his protest against his visitor Enan's design to make him join him on a roving expedition. Enan glares, and asks, "Am I a fox and thou a leopard that I should fear thee?" Then his note

changes, and his tone becomes coaxing and bland. Joseph cannot resist his fascination. Together they start, riding on their asses. Then said Enan unto Joseph, "Carry thou me, or I will carry thee." But, continues the narrator, Joseph, we were both riding on our asses. "What dost thou mean? Our asses carry us both. Explain thy words." "It is the story of the peasant¹ with the king's officer."

THE CLEVER GIRL AND THE KING'S DREAM.²

A king with many wives dreamt that he saw a monkey³ leaping over them; his face fell, and his spirit was troubled. "This is none other," said he, "than a foreign king, who will invade my realm, and take my harem for his spoil." An officer told the king of a clever interpreter of dreams, and the king despatched him to find out the meaning of his ominous vision.⁴ He set forth on his ass, and met a countryman riding: "Carry me," said the officer, "or I will carry thee." The peasant was amazed: "But our asses carry us both," he said. And as they pass on the officer made remarks on the field and the tower. "Thou tiller of the earth," said the officer, "thou art earth, and eateth earth." "There is snow on the hill," said the officer, and as the month was Tammuz, the peasant laughed. They passed a road with wheat growing on each side. "A horse, blind in one eye, has passed here," said the officer, "loaded with oil one side, and vinegar on the other."⁵ They saw a field richly covered with abounding corn, and the peasant praised it. "Yes," said the officer, "if the corn is not already eaten." They saw a lofty tower. "Well fortified," remarked the peasant. "Fortified without, if not ruined within," replied the officer. A funeral passed them. "As to this old man whom they are burying," said the officer, "I cannot tell whether he is alive or dead." And the peasant thought his companion mad to make such unintelligible remarks. They neared a

¹ C., פריץ; P., פֶּרֶץ. This confusion I have noted in varying forms of other Midrashim.

² See the essay *Die Kluge Dirne*, in Benfey's *Kleinere Schrifter*, Part III. page 156; Jacobs' *Indian Fairy Tales*, p. 251.

³ C., קוף; P., קוף.

⁴ C. is here much more intelligible than P., which does not introduce the peasant, but we suddenly find him conversing with the officer. So, later on, the series of enigmatic remarks by the officer is very confused in P.

⁵ See *Echa Rabbathi I.*, in the seventh Athenian episode.

village where the peasant lived, and he invited the officer to stay with him overnight. The peasant, in dead of the night, told his wife and daughters of the foolish things the officer had said, though he looked quite wise. "Nay," said the peasant's youngest daughter, a maiden of fifteen years, "the man is no fool; thou didst not comprehend the depth of his meaning. The tiller of the earth eats food grown from the earth. 'The snow on the hill' meant thy white beard (on thy head); thou should'st have answered, 'Time caused it.'¹ The horse blind in one eye he knew had passed, because he saw that the wheat was eaten on one side of the way, and not on the other; and as for its burden, he saw that the vinegar had parched the dust, while the oil had not. His saying, 'Carry me, or I will carry thee,' signifies that he who beguiles the way with stories and proverbs and riddles, carries his companion, relieving him from the tedium of the journey. The corn of the field they passed," continued the girl, "was already eaten if the owner were poor, and had sold it before it was reaped. The lofty and stately tower was in ruins within if it was without necessary stores. About the funeral, too, his remark was true. If the old man left a son he was still alive, if he were childless, he was indeed dead."

In the morning, the girl asked her father to give the officer the food she would prepare.² She gave him thirty eggs, a dish full of milk, and a whole loaf. "Tell me," said she, "how many days old the month is; is the moon new, and the sun at its zenith?" Her father ate two eggs, a little of the loaf, and drank some of the milk, and gave the rest to the officer. "Tell thy daughter," he said, "the sun is not full, neither is the moon, for the month is two days old." "Ah," laughed the peasant, as he told his daughter the answers of the officer, "ah, my girl, I told you he was a fool, for we are now in the middle of the month." "Did you eat anything of what I gave you?" asked the girl of her father. And he told her of the two eggs, the morsel of bread, and the sip of water that he had taken. "Now I know," said the girl, "of a surety that the man is very wise." And the officer, too, felt that she was wise, and so he told her the king's dream. She went back with him to the king. "Search thy harem," said the girl, "and thou wilt find among thy women a man disguised in female garb."³ He searched, and found that her words were true

¹ הזמן גרמה. C. alone has this pun.

² The whole of this part of the story is absent from P.

³ The incident of a man disguised as a woman occurs, though in another context, in the seventh Vizir's story in *Sindibad*. See Clouston, page 286, and Cassel, page 11a of Hebrew text, and page 154 for comments and parallels.

The man was slain, and the women too, and the peasant's daughter became the king's sole queen, for he never took another wife besides her.

THE NIGHT'S REST.

Thus Joseph and the giant Enan journey on, and they stay over-night in a village inn. Then commences a series of semi-medical wrangles which fill up a large portion of the book. Joseph demands food and wine, and Enan gives him a little of the former and none of the latter. Even their asses are starved, and Joseph sarcastically remarks: "To-morrow it will be indeed a case of carry thou me or I thee, for our asses will not be able to bear us." At dawn Enan rouses him, and when he sees that his ass is still alive, he exclaims, "Man and beast thou savest, O Lord!"¹

They proceed, and Enan weeps as they near a town. Here, says he, my dear friend died, a man of wisdom and of judgment. I will tell thee a little of his cleverness.

THE DISHONEST SINGER² AND THE WEDDING ROBES.

A man once came crying to him in distress. His only daughter was betrothed to a youth, and the bridegroom and his father came to the bride's house on the eve of the wedding to view her ornaments and beautiful clothes. When the bride's father rose next day, everything had vanished, jewels and trousseau together. "My friend," said Enan, "went back with the man to examine the scene of the robbery. He found but one place in the wall where entry was possible, a crevice in which an orange tree grew, and its position acted like thorns and prickles. Next door lived a singer, Paltiel ben Agan³ by name, and my late friend, the judge, interviewed him and made him strip. His body was covered with cuts and scratches, and his guilt discovered. "My son," said he,⁴ "beware of singers, for they are mostly thieves; trust no word of theirs, for they are liars; they are fond of women, and long after other people's money. They fancy they are clever, but they know not their left hand from their right; they raise their hands all day and call, but know not to whom. A singer stands at his post, raised above all other men, and he thinks he is as lofty as his place. He constantly emits sounds which mount to his brain and dry it up; hence he is so witless."

¹ See p. 509 above.

² P. reads יִמְרָא, C., יִמְרָא.

³ P., has יִמְרָא.

⁴ All of this diatribe occurs only in C.

THE NOBLEMAN AND THE NECKLACE.

Then Enan told me another story of his friend the judge's sagacity : A man lived in Cordova, Jacob by name, the Broker. Once a jewelled necklet was entrusted to him for sale by the judge, the owner demanding 500 pieces of gold as its price. Jacob had the chain in his hand when he met a nobleman, one of the king's intimate friends. The nobleman offered 400 pieces for the necklet, which Jacob refused. "Come with me to my house," said the would-be purchaser. The Jew accompanied him home, and the nobleman went within. Jacob waited till the evening, but no one came out. The nobleman denied all knowledge of the jewels, so Jacob went to the judge. He sent for the nobles to address them as was his wont, and he said to his servant, "Take the fraudulent nobleman's shoe and go to his wife. Show the shoe and say : Your lord bids me ask you for the necklace he bought yesterday." The wife gave the servant the ornament, and it was restored to its rightful owner.

THE SON AND THE SLAVE.¹

And Enan went on : A merchant of wealth untold, had an only son who when he grew up said : "Father, send me on a voyage, that I may trade and see foreign lands, and talk with men of wisdom to learn from their words." The father purchased a ship and sent him on a voyage with much wealth and many friends. The father was left at home with his slave in whom he put his trust. Suddenly a pain seized him in the heart, and he died without directing how his property was to be divided. The slave took possession of everything ; no one in the town knew whether he was the man's son or not. Ten years passed, and the real son returned, with his ship laden with wealth. As they neared the harbour, the ship was nearly wrecked. They cast everything overboard, but in vain ; the crew were all thrown into the sea. The son reached the shore destitute, and returned to his father's house ; but the slave drove him away, denying his identity. They went before the judge. "Find the merchant's grave," he said to the slave, "and bring me the dead man's bones. I shall burn them for his neglect to leave a will, thus rousing strife as to his property." The slave started to obey, but the son stayed him. "Keep all," said he, "but disturb not my father's bones." "Thou art the son," said the judge ; "take this other as thy life-long slave."

¹ Cf. *Jellinek* IV. 146 ; but the close of the story is different. See also *שער החשך*, 11, where there is a similar tale ; but the end differs from both versions. The king takes two separate bones for the test of blood relationship.

Joseph and Enan pass to the the city of Tobiah.¹ At the gate they are accosted by an old and venerable man, to whom they explain that for seven days they have been on the way. He invites them to his home, treats them hospitably, and after supper tells them sweet and pleasant tales, "among his words an incident wonderful to the highest degree." This wonderful story is none other than a distorted version of the Book of Tobit. I have translated this in full, and in rhymed prose as a specimen of the original:—

THE STORY OF TOBIT.

Here, in the days of the pious of old and the elders of age untold, there lived a man upright and true, in all his doings good luck he knew. Rich was he and great, his eyes looked straight : Tobiah, the son of Ahiah the Danite, he helped the poor, to each gave his mite ; whene'er a friendless one died, the shroud he supplied, bore the corpse to the grave, nor thought his money to save. The men of the place, a sin-ruled race, slandering cried, "These Jewish knaves. O King, open our graves ; our bones they burn, into charms to turn, health to earn." The king angrily spoke, "I will weighten their yoke, and their villainy repay ; all the Jews who from to-day, die in this town, to the pit take down, to the pit hurry all, without burial. Who buries a Jew, the hour shall rue ; bitter his pang, on the gallows shall hang." Soon a proselyte did die, and no friends were by ; but the good Tobiah was nigh, the corpse did lave and dress for the grave. Some sinners saw the deed, to the judge the word they gave, who Tobiah's death decreed. Forth the saint they draw, to hang him as by law. But now they near the tree, lo ! no man can see, a blindness falls on all, and Tobiah flies their thrall. Many friends his loss do weep, but home he doth creep, God's mercies to narrate, and his own surprising fate : "Praise ye the Lord, dear friends, for his mercy never ends, and to his servants good intends." Fear the king distressed, his heart beat at his breast, new decrees his fear expressed. "Whoe'er a Jew shall harm," the king cried in alarm, "touching his person or personalty, touches the apple of my eye ; let no man do this wrong, or I'll hang him near the throng, high though his rank and his lineage long." And well he kept his word, he punished those who erred ; but on the Jews his mercies shone, the while he filled the throne.

¹ C. calls the city טוביה and טובת ; P. טובים.

Once lay the saint at rest, and glanced upon the nest of a bird within his room. Ah ! cruel was his doom ! Into his eye there went the sparrow's excrement. Tobiah's sight was gone ! He had an only son whom thus he now addressed, "When business ventures pressed, I passed from clime to clime, well I recall the time, when long I dwelt in Ind, of wealth full stores to find. But perilous was the road, and entrusted I my load with one of honest fame, Peer Hazeman his name. And now list, beloved son, go out and hire thee one, thy steps forthwith to guide unto my old friend's side. I know his love's full stream, his trust he will redeem ; when heareth he my plight, when seeth he thy sight, then will he do the right." The youth found whom he sought, a man by travel taught, the ways of Ind he knew ; he knew them through and through, he knew them up and down, as a townsman knows his town. He brought him to his sire, who straightway did inquire, "Knowest thou an Indian spot, a city named Tobot ?" "Full well I know the place, I spent a two years' space in various enterprise ; its people all are wise and honest men and true." "What must I give to you," asked Tobiah of his guest, "to take my son in quest ?" "Of pieces pure of gold, full fifty must be told." "I'll pay you that with joy ; start forth now with my boy." A script the son did write which Tobiah did indite, and on his son bestow a sign his friend would know. The father kissed his son, "In peace," said he, "get gone ; may God my life maintain till thou art come again." The youth and guide to Toboth hied, and reached anon, Peër Hazeman. "Why askest thou my name ?" Straight the answer came : "Tobiah is my sire, and he doth inquire of thy health and thy household's." Then the letter he unfolds. The contents Peër espies, every doubt flies, he regards the token with no word spoken. "'Tis the son of my friend, who greeting doth send. Is it well with him ? Say." "Well with him alway." "Then dwell here awhile, and the hours beguile with the tales you will tell of him I loved so well." "Nay, I must part to soothe my father's heart. I am his only trust, return at once I must." Peër Hazeman agrees, the lad to release ; gives him all his father's loan, and gifts of his own, raiment and two slaves. To musical staves, the son doth homeward wend. By the shore of the sea, went the lad full of glee, and the wind blew a blast, and a fish up did cast. Then hastened the guide to open the fish's side, took the liver and the gall, to make evil to fall ; the liver to put demons to flight, the gall to restore men's sight. The youth begged his friend these specifics to lend, then went on his way to where his sick sire lay. Then spake the youth to his father the truth. "Send not away the guide without pay." The son sought the man, through the city he ran, but the man had disappeared. Said Tobiah, "Be not afeared, 'twas Elijah the seer,

whom God sent here to stand by our side, our needs to provide." He bathed both his eyes with the gall of the prize, and his sight was restored by the grace of the Lord.

Then said he to his son, "Now God his grace has shown, dost thou not yearn to do a deed in return? My niece forthwith wed." "But her husbands three are dead, each gave up his life as each made her his wife; to her shame and her sorrow, they survived not the morrow." "If thou wilt do as I wish, take the liver of the fish and burn it in fume at the door of her room, 'twill give the demon his doom." At his father's command, with his life in his hand, the youth loved the maid and wed her nothing afraid. For long timid hours his prayer Tobiah pours; but the incense was alight, the demon took flight, and safe was the night. Long and happily wed, on their lives sweetly sped.

THE PARALYTIC, THE MAN WHO HONOURED HIS FATHER, AND
HE WHO ADORED THE CRUCIFIX.

Their entertainer tells Joseph and Enan another story of piety connected with the burial of the dead.

"There lived in the days of old a saintly man whose abode was on the way to the graveyard. Every funeral passed his door, and he would ever rise and join the procession, and assist those engaged in the burial. In his old age his feet were paralysed, and he could not leave his bed; the dead passed his doors, and he sighed that he could not rise to display his wonted respect. Then prayed he to the Lord: "O Lord, who givest eyes to the blind and feet to the lame, hear me from the corner of my sorrowful bed. Grant that when a pious man is borne to his grave, I may be able to rise to my feet." His prayer was heard, and whenever a pious man was buried, he rose and prayed for his soul. On a day, there died one who had grown old in the world's repute, a man of excellent piety, yet the lame man could not rise as his funeral passed.¹ Next day died a quarrelsome fellow, of ill repute, and when his body was carried past the lame man's door, the paralytic was able to stand. Every one was amazed, for hitherto the lame man's rising or resting had been a gauge of the departed's virtues. Two sage men resolved to get to the bottom of the mystery. They interviewed the wife of the fellow who had died second. The wife confirmed the worst account of him, but added, "He had an old father, aged one hundred years, and he honoured and served him. Every day he kissed his hand, gave him drink, undressed and dressed

¹ See *Jellinek*, V., 136 and 206.

him ; daily he brought ox and lamb bones, from which he drew the marrow, and made with it dainty foods." Then the people knew that the honouring of his father had atoned for his transgressions. Then the two inquisitors went to the house of the pious man, before whom the paralytic had been unable to rise. His widow gave him an excellent character ; he was gentle and pious ; prayed three times a day, and at midnight rose and went to a special chamber to say his prayers. No one had ever seen the room but himself, as he ever kept the key in his bosom. The two inquisitors opened the door of this chamber, and found a small box hidden in the window-sill ; they opened the box, and found in it a golden figure, bearing a crucifix. Thus the man had been one of those who do the deeds of Zimri, and expect the reward of Phineas."¹

TABLE TALK

They retire to rest, and their sleep is sweet and long. By strange and devious ways they continue the journey on the morrow. Again they pass the night at the house of one of Enan's friends, who welcomes them cordially, feeds them bountifully, and then tells stories and proverbs "from the books of the Arabs."

A man said to a sage : "Thou braggest of thy wisdom, but it came from me." "Yes," replied the sage, "and it forgot its way back." What is style ? Be brief and do not repeat yourself. The king once visited a nobleman's house, and asked the nobleman's son : "Whose house is better, your father's or mine ?" "My father's," said the boy, "while the king is in it." A king put on a new robe which did not become him. "It is not good to wear," said a courtier, "but it is good to put on." The king gave him the robe. A bore visited a sick man : "What ails thee?" he asked. "Thy presence," said the sufferer. A man of high lineage reviled a wise man of lowly birth. "My lineage is a blot on me," retorted the sage, "thou art a blot on thy lineage." Diogenes and Dives were attacked by robbers. "Woe is me," said Dives, "if they recognise me?" "Woe is me," said Diogenes, "if they do not recognise me." An Arab's brother died. "Why did he die?" one asked. "Because he lived," was the answer. Which is the best of the beasts ? Woman.² Hide thy virtues, as thou hidest thy faults. A dwarf brought a complaint to his king. "No one," said the king, "would

¹ See p. 508 above. The author here enters into a powerful denunciation of those who are "abstainers from virtue"—who are virtuous without and vicious within.

² Cf. *Ben Sira*, 22b ; *Mishle Chachamim*, 22.

hurt such a pigmy." "But," retorted the dwarf, "my injurer is smaller than I am." The king heard a woman at prayer, "O God," she said, "remove this king from us." "And put a better in his stead," added the eavesdropping monarch. Take measures for this life as though thou wilt live for ever; prepare for the next world as though thou diest to-morrow. Three things weary : a lamp that will not burn, a messenger who dawdles, a table spread and waiting. Then follow a string of sayings about *threes*.¹ Reason rules the body, wisdom is the pilot, law is its light.² Might is the lion's, burdens are the ox's, wisdom is the man's; spinning the spider's, building the bee's, making stores the camel's. In three cases lying is permissible : in war, in reconciling man to man, in appeasing one's wife. Their host concludes his lengthy list of sententious remarks thus :—A king had a signet ring on which were engraved the words, "Thou hast bored me : rise !" and when a guest stayed too long he showed the visitor the ring. This was the signal for the party to retire to rest.³

THE CITY OF ENAN.

Next day the wayfarers reach Enan's own city, the place which he had all along desired Joseph to see. He shows Joseph his house; but he replies, "I crave for food, not for sight-seeing." "Surely," said Enan; "the more hurry the less speed." At last the table is spread; the cloth is ragged, the dishes contain unleavened bread, such as there is no pleasure in eating, and there was a dish of herbs and vinegar. Then there ensues a long wrangle, displaying much medical knowledge, on the physiology of herbs and vegetables; on the eating of flesh, much and fast. Enan makes sarcastic remarks on Joseph's rapacious appetite. He tells Joseph he must not eat this nor that; a joint of lamb is brought on the table, Enan says the head is bad, and the feet, and the flesh and the fat; so that Joseph has no alternative but to eat it all.⁴ "I fear that what happened to the king will befall thee," said Enan. "Let me feed

¹ Three is a favourite number in Sanskrit collections of this nature.

² P. is here better.

³ This conversation is extremely long, and I have very much shortened it. C. and P. vary considerably here.

⁴ C. is much longer here than P.

first,"¹ said Joseph ; " then you can tell me what happened to the king."

THE PRINCESS AND THE ROSE.

A gardener² came to his garden in the winter. It was the month of Tebet, and he found some roses in flower. He rejoiced at seeing them ; and he picked them, and put them on a precious dish, carried them to the king, and placed them before him. The king was surprised, and the flowers were goodly in his sight ; and he gave the gardener one hundred pieces of gold. Then said the king, in his heart, " To-day we will make merry, and have a feast." All his servants and faithful ministers were invited to rejoice over the joy of the roses. And he sent for his only daughter, then with child ; and she stretched forth her hand to take a rose, and a serpent that lay in the dish leapt at her and stung her, and she died before night.

QUESTION AND ANSWER.

But Joseph's appetite was not to be stayed by such tales as this. So Enan tells him of the " Lean Fox and the Hole " ; but in vain. " Open not thy mouth to Satan," said Joseph ; " I fear for my appetite, lest it become smaller ; " and goes on eating.

Now Enan tries another tack : he will question him, and put him through his paces.

" How canst thou sleep," said Enan, " when thou hast eaten everything, fresh and stale ? As I live, thou shalt not seek thy bed until I test thy wisdom—until I prove whether all this provender has entered the stomach of a wise man or of a fool." Then follows an extraordinary string of anatomical, medical, scientific, and Talmudical questions about the optic nerves, the teeth ; why a man lowers his head when thinking over things he has never known, but raises his head when thinking over what he once knew but has forgotten ; the physiology of the digestive organs, the physiology of laughter ; why a boy eats more than a man ; why it is harder to ascend than to go down a hill ; why snow is white ; why babies have no teeth ;³ why children's first set of teeth falls out ; why saddest tears are saltest ; why sea

¹ This retort is only in P.

² C., גנן ; P., בעל הגן.

³ C. alone has this. Altogether, the medical conversations are fuller in C. than in P.

water is heavier than fresh ; why hail descends in summer ; why the sages said that bastards are mostly clever. To these questions, which Enan pours out in a stream, Joseph readily gives answers. But now Enan is hoist with his own petard. "I looked at him," continues the poet, "and sleep entrapped his eyes, and his eyelids kissed the irides. Ah ! I laughed in my heart, now will I talk to him, and puzzle him as he has been puzzling me. He shall not sleep, as he would not let me sleep. 'My lord,' said I, 'let me now question thee.' 'I am sleepy,' said he, 'but ask on.' 'What subject shall I choose ?' I said. 'Any subject,' he replied ; 'of all knowledge I know the half.'" Joseph asks him astronomical, musical, logical, arithmetical questions ; to all of which Enan replies, "I do not know." "But," protests Joseph, "how could you assert that you knew half of every subject when it is clear that you know nothing ?" "Exactly," said Enan, "for Aristotle says : 'He who says, "I do not know," has already attained the half of knowledge.'" But he says he knows medicine ; so Joseph proceeds to question him. Soon he discovers that Enan is again deceiving him ; and he roundly abuses Enan for his duplicity.

Enan at length is moved to retort. "I wonder at thy learning," says Enan, "but more at thy appetite."¹ Then the lamp goes out, the servant falls asleep, and they are left in darkness till the morning. Then Joseph demands his breakfast, and goes out to see his ass. The ass attempts to bite Joseph, who strikes it, and the ass speaks. "I am one of the family of Balaam's ass,"² says the animal. "But I am not Balaam," says Joseph, "to divine that thou hast eaten nothing all night." The servant asserts that he fed the ass, but the animal had gobbled up everything, his appetite being equal to his owner's. But Joseph will not believe this ; and Enan is deeply hurt. "Peace !" he shouts, and his eyes shoot flames, and his nostrils distil smoke ; "Peace, or as I live, and my ancestor Asmodæus, I will seize thee with my little finger, and will show thee the city of David."

ENAN REVEALS HIMSELF.

In timid tones I asked him, continues Joseph, "Who is this Asmodæus, thy kinsman ?" "Asmodæus," said Enan, "the great prince who, on his wing, bore Solomon from his kingdom to a distant strand." "Woe is me," I moaned, "I thought thee a friend ; now thou art a demon. Why did'st thou hide thy nature ; why did'st thou conceal thy descent ? Why hast thou taken me from my home in guile ?" "Nay," said Enan, "where was thy understanding ? I gave thee my name, thou

¹ C. much fuller here.

² Thus P. ; C. has, "I am the son of Balaam's ass."

shouldst have inverted it."¹ Then Enan gives his pedigree: "I am Enan, the Satan, son of Arnan the Demon, son of the Place of Death, son of Anger, son of Death's Shadow, son of Terror, son of Trembling, son of Destruction, son of Extinction, son of Evil-name, son of Mocking, son of Plague, son of Deceit, son of Injury, son of Asmodæus."² Then Enan quiets Joseph's fears, and promises that no harm shall befall him. He goes through Enan's city, sees wizards and sorcerers, and sinners and fools, all giants.

ENAN'S FRIEND AND HIS DAUGHTER.

Then Enan introduces his own especial friend: ³ "He is good and wise," said Enan, "despite his tall stature. He shows his goodness in hating the wise and loving fools; he is generous, for he will give a beggar a crust of dry bread, and make him pay for it; he knows medicine, for he can tell that if a man is buried he has either been sick or had an accident; he knows astronomy, for he can tell that it is day when the sun shines, and night when the stars appear; he knows arithmetic, for he can tell that one and one make two; he knows mensuration, for he can tell how many handbreadths his belly measures; he knows music, for he can tell the difference between the barking of a dog and the braying of an ass." "But," said I, continues Joseph, "how can you be the friend of such a one? Accursed is he, accursed his master." "Nay," answered Enan, "I love him not; I know his vile nature: 'tis his daughter that binds me to him, for she is fair beyond my power to praise." "Yet I warned him against marrying the daughter of an uneducated man, an am-haaretz." Then follows a compilation of passages directed against ignorance.⁴ "Ah!" cries Enan, "your warning moves me. My love for her is fled. Thou fearest God and lovest me, my friend. What is a friend? One heart in two bodies. Then find me another wife, one who is beautiful and and good. Worse than a plague is a bad woman. Listen to what once befell me with such a one."

THE WASHERWOMAN WHO DID THE DEVIL'S WORK.⁵

Once upon a time, in my wanderings to and fro upon the earth, I came to a city whose inhabitants dwelt together, happy, prosperous, and secure. I made myself well acquainted with the place and people, but despite all my efforts, I was unable to entrap a single one. "This

¹ See p. 509 above.

² P. has a longer chain of descent.

³ See p. 507 note 1 above.

⁴ C. considerably fuller here.

⁵ This story is peculiar to C.; P. does not give it.

is no place for me," I said, "I had better return to my own country." I left the city, and journeying on came across a river, at whose brink I seated myself. Scarcely had I done so, when a woman appeared bearing her garments to be washed in the river. She looked at me, and asked, "Art thou of the children of men or of demons?" "Well," said I, "I have grown up among men, but I was born among demons." "But what art thou after here?" "Ah," I replied, "I have spent a whole month in yonder city. And what have I found? A city full of friends, enjoying every happiness in common. In vain have I tried to mingle a little of wickedness among them." Then the woman, with a supercilious air: "If I am to take thee for a specimen, I can have a very poor opinion of the whole tribe of demons. You seem mighty enough, but you haven't the strength of women. Stop here and keep an eye on the wash; but mind, play me no tricks. I will go back to the city and kindle therein fire and fury, and pour over it a spirit of mischief, and thou shalt see how I can manage things." "Agreed," said I, "I will stay here and await thy coming, and see how affairs turn out in thy hands."

The washerwoman departed, went into the city, called upon one of the great families there residing, and requested to see the lady of the house. She asked for a washing order, which she promised to execute to the most perfect satisfaction. While the housemaid was collecting the linen, the washerwoman lifted her eyes to the beautiful face of the mistress, and exclaims: "Yes, they are a dreadful lot, the men; they are all alike, a malediction on them! The best of them is not to be trusted. They love all women but their own wives." "What dost thou mean?" asked the lady. "Merely this," she answered: "Coming hither from my house, whom should I meet but thy husband, making love to another woman, and such a hideous creature too! How he could forsake beauty so rare and exquisite as thine for such disgusting ugliness, passes my understanding. But do not weep, dear lady, don't distress thyself and give way. I know a means by which I will bring that husband of thine to his senses, so that thou shalt suffer no reproach, and he shall never love any other woman than thee. This is what thou must do. When thy husband comes home, speak softly and sweetly to him; let him suspect nothing; and when he has fallen asleep, take a sharp razor and cut off three hairs from his beard; black or white hairs, it matters not. These thou must afterwards give me, and with them I will compound such a remedy that his eyes shall be darkened in their sockets, so that he will look no more upon other lovely women, but cling to thee alone in mighty and manifest and enduring love." All this the lady promised, and gifts besides for the washerwoman, should her plan prosper.

Carrying the garments with her, the woman now sought out the

lady's husband. With every sign of distress in her voice and manner, she told him that she had a frightful secret to divulge to him. She knew not if she would have the strength to do so. She would rather die first. The husband was all the more eager to know, and would not be refused. "Well, then," she said, "I have just been to thy house where my lady, thy wife, gave me these garments to wash; and, while I was yet standing there, a youth, of handsome mien and nobly attired, arrived, and the two withdrew into an adjoining room: so I inclined mine ear to listen to their speech, and this is what I overheard: The young man said to thy wife, 'Kill thy husband, and I will marry thee.' She, however, declared that she was afraid to do such a dreadful deed. 'Oh,' answered he, with a little courage, 'it is quite easy. When thy husband is asleep take a sharp razor and cut his throat.'" In fierce rage, but suppressing all outward indication of it, the husband returned home. Pretending to fall asleep, he watched his wife closely; saw her take a razor to sever the three hairs for the washerwoman's spell; darted up suddenly, wrested the razor from her hands, and with it slew his wife on the spot.

The news spread; the relations of the wife united to avenge her death, and kill the husband. In their turn his relatives resolved to avenge him; both houses get embroiled, and before the feud was at an end two hundred and thirty lives were sacrificed. The city resounded with a great cry, the like of which had never been heard. "From that day," concluded Enan, "I decided to injure no man more. Yet for this very reason I fear to wed an evil woman." "Fear not," returned Joseph, "the girl I recommend is beautiful and good." And Enan married her, and loved her.

JOSEPH RETURNS HOME TO BARCELONA.

"After awhile I said to him," concludes Joseph: "I have sojourned long enough in this city, whose ways please me not. Ignorance prevails, and poetry is unknown; the law is despised; the young are set over the old; they slander and are impudent. Let me go home after my many years of wandering in a strange land. Fain would I seek the place where dwells the great prince, R. Sheshet Benveniste,¹ of whom Wisdom says, Thou art my teacher, and Faith, Thou art my friend." "What," said Enan, "what qualities brought him to this lofty place of righteousness

¹ Thus P.; C. has ששֶׁת בֶּן בִּנְבִישֶׁת.

and power?" "His simplicity and humility, his uprightness and saintliness."¹

And with this eulogy of the aged Rabbi of Barcelona, the poem ends.

It will be clear from the mode in which I have rendered these stories, and also from what has preceded, that I take Zabara to be rather a literary curiosity than a poet. Some poetical merits he has, but he is more interesting as a *conteur* than as an imaginative writer. The New-Hebrew verse was always an exotic, never quite a natural flower; for the labours of the most skilful gardeners failed to acclimatise it thoroughly in European soil. Yet his humour, his fluent simplicity, his easy mastery over Hebrew, his invention, his occasional gleams of fancy, his very artlessness, combine to give his poem some right to the title by which he called it—*The Book of Delight*.

I. ABRAHAMS.

¹ C. has at the end an additional paragraph beginning ירושלמי זריוות מביאה לידי נקיוות. This passage is quoted from Jer. *Shekalim*, 47c. Cf. T. B. *Abodah Zarah*, 20b.
